

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
Division of Operations-Management

MEMORANDUM OM 11-69

July 8, 2011

TO: All Regional Directors, Officers-in-Charge
and Resident Officers

FROM: Richard A. Siegel, Associate General Counsel

SUBJECT: New Employee Conference, August 22 – 26, 2011

We have finalized arrangements for a New Employee Conference to be conducted at the Four Seasons Hotel located at 2800 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. from 1:00 p.m. on Monday, August 22, through 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Friday, August 26, 2011. It is expected that participants will travel to the conference on Monday, August 22. This memorandum describes the conference, travel to the conference, lodging, conference dress, and telephone use. The list of the individuals who have been designated to attend the conference will be sent by e-mail.

TRAVEL TO CONFERENCE: Conference participants should make their own transportation arrangements for arrival in time for the opening of the conference at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, August 22, 2011. **Participants will travel to the conference on Monday, August 22, 2011 and return on Friday, August 26, 2011, unless otherwise authorized by the Division of Operations-Management.** In the event that it is not possible for an attendee to travel on Monday August 22 and arrive at the conference on time, or leave on Friday August 26, the attendee must receive authorization from Division of Operations-Management to make different travel arrangements. Attendees seeking this authorization should contact DAGC Beth Tursell (202-273-2888) or AGC Charles Posner (202-273-2887). Those authorized to travel on Sunday will be reimbursed for per diem and lodging at the conference hotel will be at Agency expense. The conference will conclude no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Friday, August 26, 2011. The Four Seasons Hotel is located within walking distance from the Foggy Bottom Metro Station on the Blue Line.

Normally, when a traveler goes on temporary duty, the traveler is required to use the Contract City-Pair Program that offers YCA, Government Contract fare (fully refundable) or a CA fare that is a capacity controlled airline fare (for example MCA, QCA, or VCA, with rates that are lower than the normal YCA and may be available at the time of booking). All of these options are acceptable under the Contract City-Pair Program. This mandatory regulation is governed by Federal Travel Regulation, 41 CFR Part 301-10, FTR Amendment 2006-04. Because the fares have increased over the years, we encourage Agency travelers attending NLRB conferences to take advantage of the exception that is noted in FTR 301-10.107(c) – *A noncontract carrier offers a lower fare to the general public that, if used, will result in a lower trip cost to the Government.* Thus, if a traveler can find an airfare that saves the government money, it is appropriate to purchase that fare. **Note** that these tickets must be purchased directly from the commercial carrier and **should not** be purchased through third party providers such as Travelocity, Expedia or Kayak.

Accordingly, there are three options for purchasing airline tickets:

1. Purchasing a ticket on an YCA or a __CA fare (capacity controller fare/fully refundable) by contacting Carlson Wagonlit reservation center at 1-800-787-6051. When purchasing a ticket through Carlson Wagonlit, the ticket will be automatically charged to the Agency Central Bill Account (CBA account).
2. Identify an airfare at a lower cost from a commercial carrier and purchase that ticket (which will probably be non-refundable), through Carlson Wagonlit as noted above.
3. Purchasing a ticket directly from a commercial carrier at a lower fare (normally a nonrefundable fare) than the YCA or __CA fares, by the traveler paying for the ticket with the government travel card.

Please make the extra effort, before acquiring your airline ticket, to determine if the airline ticket would be less expensive by purchasing it from a commercial carrier as opposed to using Carlson Wagonlit to obtain the ticket. Employees who do not currently have an Agency credit card with which to charge a noncontract fare may request an Agency travel card through their Office Manager.

The cost of the ticket and any fees associated with the booking will be reimbursed to the traveler provided it does not exceed the government contract fare (YCA or __CA). The traveler will be reimbursed after the conference by submitting a travel voucher. The receipt for the airline ticket purchased must show the form of paying on it (e.g., VISA XXXXXXXX9988).

In this case, the person setting up the travel authorization should:

- a. Use the noncontract rate **only** if the rate is less than the contract rate offered by Carlson Wagonlit.
- b. Note in the comment field that the use of a noncontract carrier is authorized for this specific conference.

Purchasing a ticket on a commercial carrier to travel to the conference may result in a cost advantage to the Agency in comparison to the cost of purchasing a ticket on a contract carrier. The commercial carrier's lower ticket price will probably require advance purchase of a nonrefundable ticket. Carriers usually assess an additional fee if these tickets are canceled or if the flight is rescheduled. While there is little risk that the conference would be canceled, there is the possibility that someone will not be able to make it to the conference for a legitimate reason.

In using commercial carrier lower cost flights, the traveler needs to be reasonably sure that, once the reservation is made, there will be no need to change the reservation. If there is an **unforeseen personal or family exigency** that prevents the traveler from attending the conference, the Agency will reimburse you for the price of the ticket if it is nonrefundable.

For both cancellation and changes in commercial flight arrangements, the traveler who purchased a ticket from a common carrier must:

1. Notify the DAGC Beth Tursell.

2. Contact the airline.
3. Submit the travel voucher with the receipt of the airline ticket and cancellation/change fee with a letter stating the reason for not attending. The letter should be scanned into the travel voucher.

Transportation from the Washington airports is available via subway or taxi. Participants are encouraged to utilize available transportation at the lowest cost to the Government.

In order to keep track of the cost of airline travel, the cost of the airline ticket should be provided on the hotel survey mentioned below.

CONFERENCE LODGING: A general travel order covering all those attending the program has been issued by Division of Operations-Management. We will be sending all participants and their office managers their travel order number by e-mail. The Agency will pay for lodging for four nights (August 22 – August 25) by means of a purchase order. The hotel has advised that, based on availability, participants in the conference will be able to get the government rate (\$157 per night) two days before and after the conference dates. Participants extending their stay will be responsible for payment directly to the hotel for expenses relating to arrivals before Monday, August 22, 2011 and departures after Friday, August 26, 2011, unless the extended stay is authorized by the Division of Operations-Management.

All arrangements for hotel accommodations will be made by the Division of Operations-Management. **Please do not contact the hotel directly to make reservations.** After making the airline reservations, each participant must complete the hotel survey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/New_Employee_Conference) **as soon as possible but in no event later than COB, Friday, July 14, 2011.**

The per diem rates for meals and incidental expense in Washington, D.C. are \$71 per day on full days and \$53.25 on the partial/travel days. To avoid having to decrease M&IE rates of participants as required by GSA Travel Regulations, we will not be providing breakfast to conference participants. Please share this information about the per diem rates with the individuals in your office who will prepare your travel voucher so the correct amounts are entered in E2 Solutions and the vouchers can be processed without delay. Each office will be responsible for **submitting travel vouchers for all conference participants in their office through E2 Solutions to your AGC or Deputy by COB, Monday, September 12, 2011.**

CONFERENCE DRESS: Casual dress will be appropriate throughout the conference. We suggest that participants bring a light sweater or jacket as sometimes the meeting rooms are chilly.

TELEPHONE: To make phone calls from the hotel at the minimum cost, conference participants must use Agency calling cards. All participants should bring their calling cards with them to the conference so that the Agency may avoid expensive hotel charges for long distance calls.

QUESTIONS: If you have any questions concerning this memorandum, the training program, or if an emergency arises that would prevent any participant from a timely arrival or attendance at the conference, please contact AGC Charles Posner (202-273-2887) or DAGC Beth Tursell (202-273-2888) or at their respective e-mail addresses.

/s/
R.A.S.

cc: NLRBU